

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 NIC-01

TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-14 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /140 W

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R 121741Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7923

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EGEN, UK

SUBJECT: TORY MANIFESTO: FIRM ACTION FOR A FAIR
BRITAIN

REF: LONDON 1887

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. CONSERVATIVE PARTY ELECTION MANI-
FESTO PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 11 AND LAUNCHED AT PRESS
CONFERENCE BY PRIME MINISTER HEATH IS A BALANCED MIXTURE
OF EXPOSITION DEFENDING GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE SINCE
1970, OUTLINE OF PROGRAMS FOR THE FUTURE, AND ATTACKS ON
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LABOR PARTY'S PERFORMANCE IN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION.

ACCUSING LABOR OF HAVING SWUNG TO LEFT-WING PROGRAMS MORE DANGEROUS AND EXTREME THAN EVER BEFORE AND ASSERTING THAT SMALL NUMBERS OF MILITANT EXTREMISTS HAVE MANIPULATED AND ABUSED THE MONOPOLY POWER OF THEIR UNIONS, MANIFESTO REPEATEDLY URGES THE CAUSE OF FIRMNESS, MODERATION, PERSONAL CHOICE, REASONABLENESS AND FAIRNESS. TOUCHING ON ALMOST EVERY CONCEIVABLE AREA OF GOVERNMENT POLICY, MANIFESTO NEVERTHELESS SETS TORY PLANS AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF ECONOMIC AUSTERITY, AVOIDS DISCLOSING COSTS OF FUTURE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS OR SIGNIFICANT CLUES TO ITS BUDGET AND FISCAL POLICIES. END SUMMARY.

2. TWO FEATURES OF MANIFESTO HAVE GENERATED THE GREATEST POLITICAL REACTION. ONE WAS STATEMENT THAT ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN TO PUT GREATER BURDEN OF STRIKE ACTION ON STRIKERS AND THEIR UNIONS; "IT IS ONLY RIGHT THAT THE UNIONS THEMSELVES AND NOT THE TAXPAYER, SHOULD ACCEPT THEIR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WELFARE OF THE FAMILIES OF MEN WHO CHOOSE TO GO ON STRIKE; AND AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH TRADE UNIONS AND EMPLOYERS WE WILL AMEND THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM ACCORDINGLY." WITHOUT COMMITMENT TO THE PRECISE MANNER IN WHICH TORIES WILL ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH THIS ISSUE, EXCEPT THAT IT WOULD BE DONE AFTER CONSULTATION WITH TUC AND CBI, THIS PLANK OF THEIR PLATFORM WAS UNDOUBTEDLY INSERTED AT THE INSISTENCE OF MANY REGULAR PARTY MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN EXPRESSING OUTRAGE THAT STRIKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES CAN SUBSIST, UNDER PRESENT SOCIAL BENEFIT LAWS, AT THE TAXPAYER'S EXPENSE DURING A STRIKE.

3. THE OTHER PROPOSAL EVOKING PUBLIC INTEREST IS ONE WHICH WOULD INTRODUCE A TWICE-YEARLY REVIEW OF PENSIONS AND OTHER LONG-TERM BENEFITS FOR THE RETIRED--WITH A SORT OF BUILT-IN ESCALATOR ARRANGEMENT. THIS PROPOSAL DEALS WITH A SERIOUS PROBLEM THAT PENSIONERS FACE IN PERIOD OF INFLATION AND GIVES CREDENCE TO TORY CLAIMS TO PROTECT THE WEAK AND LEAST WELL-OFF IN SOCIETY.

4. OTHER PROMISES INCLUDE:

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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-CHANGES IN THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT, TO BE
WORKED OUT WITH BOTH SIDES OF INDUSTRY. THESE WOULD MAKE
COURT ACTION IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL A CONCILIATION PROCEDURE
HAD BEEN TRIED. TORIES WILL INTRODUCE THE POSTAL VOTE
FOR ELECTION OF UNION LEADERS AND EXECUTIVE MEMBERS IN
EFFORT TO REDUCE INFLUENCE OF EXTREMISTS.

-THE PRICE COMMISSION WILL BE GIVEN POWERS IT NEEDS
TO PROTECT THE CONSUMER FROM UNNECESSARY PRICE RISES
"AND WE WILL EXAMINE FURTHER MEANS OF CONTROLLING THE
RISE IN PRICES OF KEY ITEMS OF FOOD IN THE HOUSEHOLD
BUDGET." IN HIS FEBRAURY 12 PRESS CONFERENCE, HEATH
EMPHASIZED CONSERVATIVE "FLEXIBILITY" ON SUBJECT OF
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POSSIBLE FURTHER FOOD SUBSIDIES.

-ACTION WILL BE TAKEN ON A STRING OF OFFICIAL REPORTS INVOLVING HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK, THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY, ABORTION, ADOPTION, NURSING, AND LIBERALIZATION OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT IS PROMISED. NO COMMITMENT IS MADE REGARDING THE KILBRANDON REPORT ON THE CONSTITUTION (WHICH RECOMMENDS REGIONAL PARLIAMENTS FOR SCOTLAND AND WALES).

5. THE MANIFESTO EMPHASIZES THAT BRITAIN IS IN A PERIOD OF CRISIS, FACING DANGERS FROM BOTH WITHIN THE COUNTRY AND FROM OUTSIDE. IT ASSERTS THAT IN SUCH A PERIOD GOOD SENSE AND MODERATION MUST PREVAIL, THAT THE AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY MUST BE IN THE HANDS OF A STRONG GOVERNMENT AND THAT THIS MEANS A CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WITH A RENEWED MANDATE FROM THE PEOPLE AND WITH A FULL FIVE YEARS IN WHICH TO GUIDE THE NATION SAFELY THROUGH THE DIFFICULT PERIOD THAT LIES AHEAD. IT CONCLUDES WITH A STATEMENT OF CONSERVATIVE AIMS:

-A BRITAIN UNITED IN MODERATION, NOT DIVIDED BY EXTREMISM

-A SOCIETY IN WHICH THERE IS CHANGE WITHOUT REVOLUTION

-A GOVERNMENT THAT IS STRONG IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE WEAK

-A PEOPLE WHO ENJOY FREEDOM WITH RESPONSIBILITY

-A MORALITY OF FAIRNESS WITHOUT REGIMENTATION

-A NATION WITH FAITH IN ITSELF, AND A PEOPLE WITH SELF-RESPECT. ANNENBERG

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